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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA  
JUNE 25, 2006  
PASTOR MARK FRY

1 PASTOR MARK FRY: It is really an awesome experience  
2 to be back.

3 I had last weekend out in Seattle with Adrian. He  
4 had his graduation performance.

5 He'll tell you a little bit more what he's been  
6 doing, but he's a professional dancer who has been at the  
7 Pacific Northwest Ballet since last September

8 Pastor Wenda and I flew out Thursday and we got to  
9 see the rehearsals and then Wenda came back for a wedding on  
10 Saturday and I came back then with Adrian on Monday morning.

11 It's amazing, and he'll tell you a little bit more  
12 about this, but he's living in a community.

13 It's a fraternity house, but none of the guys are in  
14 a fraternity.

15 And he moved in March from a single apartment to a  
16 house that his church doesn't own, but they kind of sponsor.

17 And so these are nine young men that all go to the  
18 same church and it was amazing.

19 I first met some of these guys on Thursday night  
20 when we got back there.

21 And one of the first things that each of them do,  
22 they just look you in the eye and, "It's so nice to meet you.  
23 You must be Adrian's dad. I've heard about you. I hope you  
24 can come to church with us on Sunday."

25 And I met a couple more of them on Friday, same

1 refrain, "I'm so glad you're here."

2 But this house of nine guys is just amazing, and  
3 you're going to hear a little more about that next week.

4 I am going to give Adrian a little more play, I  
5 guess, next week, when he talks about his community a little  
6 bit.

7 But the topic for this week is about a cleansed  
8 life, and I want to be real frank with that, although my name  
9 is not Frank.

10 But it's not a one time deal; it's a continuous  
11 process.

12 And a lot of you have known us for a long time and  
13 you remember when we first moved to Elkhorn.

14 It was nineteen years ago in another month, and when  
15 Adrian was here the last time we carried him as a baby, and  
16 now he's back as a man of God.

17 And, anyway, I'm so proud of him. I'm so grateful  
18 for you as a community, and so grateful for God.

19 But that cleansing thing, you guys, we have to work  
20 at it, because we get dirty.

21 I work out at Common Ground out here, which is the  
22 new health center that is shared by the Elkhorn schools and  
23 the community

24 And it's interesting, I've been a member of health  
25 clubs for probably the last fifteen years, and it used to be

1 that you would just get a towel and you wiped down your  
2 machine.

3 But now they have taken it to another level and they  
4 recommend you get an alcohol swab and go and wipe your germs  
5 off the machine for the next person.

6 That's not a bad thing. It's a good thing to kill  
7 germs. It's good to clean things.

8 But some of the germs we kill are surviving anyway.  
9 They aren't getting the deep cleansing.

10 One of my best friends is my physician and he  
11 doesn't really believe in antibacterial soap.

12 Because it's killing some germs, but it's also  
13 killing our immune systems.

14 And what is happening is a lot of bacteria are  
15 regenerating and reinventing themselves and they are  
16 surviving the different chemicals that we throw at them.

17 And they aren't really being killed when they are  
18 being cleansed; they are just kind of hiding for a while.

19 It's interesting, our Bolivian troupe that went over  
20 and they are now in Lapaz, they are visiting the sewers with  
21 these kids that live there.

22 And one of their most important items is the little  
23 hand soap that kills everything.

24 It's that little waterless soap that maybe you have  
25 in your car, or in your purse, or tackle box, or whatever.

1           But they were told as part of their orientation,  
2 very discreetly, after you touch these kids, who have head  
3 lice and they stink and they're dirty and everything else,  
4 just kind of discreetly, don't let the kids see it, but keep  
5 your hands clean.

6           Isn't that interesting? Because germs can kill us,  
7 and that cleansing has to happen or the sin will kill us,  
8 too.

9           So the paradox of the 21st Century for me is that we  
10 are supposed to get our hands dirty as Christians, but we are  
11 supposed to have our hearts cleansed.

12           And that's just an amazing fact for me. Get your  
13 hands dirty and have your hearts cleansed.

14           And I think one of the great passages to start at is  
15 Psalm 51, page 527, beginning at Verse 6.

16           "You desire truth in the inward being. Therefore,  
17 teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop and  
18 I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

19           The Bible is teaching something here that is very  
20 profound, but it isn't just a surface cleansing.

21           If you notice the back drop of that slide, it's a  
22 middle eastern plant, and that is what is mentioned in those  
23 verses, hyssop. That's what it looks like.

24           When the Psalmist says purge me with hyssop, he  
25 doesn't just say put it in the same room with me.

1           He wants it to penetrate into his inward being, his  
2 secret heart.

3           Adrian and I were on a journey on Friday, we were  
4 looking in health food stores for hyssop.

5           The guy at Wild Oats, he said, "I know we have it  
6 here. We used to sell it."

7           We went over to the section there, we're looking in  
8 the alphabetical order, and they have about everything but  
9 hyssop.

10           He goes, "I can't believe this. Let's go over to  
11 the nutritionist."

12           So we went over to the other side of the store and  
13 he asked, "Do you guys have any hyssop over here? I know  
14 I've seen it."

15           She goes, "We don't carry it anymore. You can order  
16 it."

17           But I did a little research on exactly what hyssop  
18 is, and it's this cleansing agent.

19           It has been around since biblical times. Cheyenne  
20 Indians used it for colds and weaknesses

21           And modern herbalists recommend it for a litany of  
22 conditions.

23           Other Native Americans, including the Omaha and  
24 Dakota Tribes, have used it to make a sweet tea-like drink.

25           It's an ideal winter time healer. It cures the

1 cough, the cold, the flu, frostbite.

2 Herbalists use it to treat bruises, burns,  
3 arthritis, upset stomach, poor circulation, infection with  
4 lice, even HIV.

5 Isn't that amazing? That's hyssop.

6 So here is the question. Has your inward being and  
7 secret heart ever gotten cleansed?

8 And is it time for that, either for the first time,  
9 or just a renewal of that?

10 Because this is really not just a keep it at arm's  
11 distance and I have washed my hands and I'm good to go kind  
12 of thing.

13 It's an amazing philosophy and concept that the  
14 Bible is talking about here.

15 It's not just water and lemon juice; it's lasting  
16 change through repentance and discipline on a daily basis.

17 Repentance and discipline. It's cleansing. It's  
18 purging. It's getting rid of the bad stuff.

19 You have to be real in order to heal and be deep  
20 cleansed. You can't hide from God.

21 And we keep stuff at an arm's distance. There are  
22 places in our hearts that we don't let the light of Christ  
23 shine.

24 "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me  
25 and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and

1 gladness. Let the bones that have been crushed rejoice.  
2 Hide your face from my sins. Blot out my iniquities. Create  
3 in me a clean heart, oh God. Put a new and right spirit  
4 within me. Do not cast me away from your presence. Do not  
5 take your Holy Spirit from me."

6 It's daily repentance. It's getting that bad stuff  
7 out so that the good stuff can come in. The grace, the  
8 light, the truth.

9 It's an interesting thing that we as mainline, Roman  
10 Catholic tradition, and also all mainline denominations, and  
11 my definition of mainline denominations are Episcopalians,  
12 Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Church of Reform, a lot  
13 of those churches are mainline denominations.

14 They are protestant churches, and likewise the Roman  
15 Catholics.

16 They have an interesting way of counting members,  
17 and they use what is called the CC method.

18 Communing contributors are considered members of  
19 churches.

20 So when you see these numbers like 70 percent of the  
21 United States is churched, that's what they are talking  
22 about.

23 And in our denomination the requirement of that is  
24 you go to church one time in a year's time and you contribute  
25 and commune, you are considered a communing contributor. You

1 are a CC.

2 That's what the rest of the world looks at and they  
3 go, gee, 70 percent of the United States goes to church?  
4 Wow. You must really be a cleansed and righteous nation.

5 Well, not exactly, because if you take that  
6 literally, and we have people in our church that do, we have  
7 people, I know this as gospel truth, they come once a year  
8 when we are serving communion, and they put their offering  
9 it, and in this case it's five bucks, and they are good for  
10 another year, because they're playing by the old rule,  
11 communing contributor.

12 They come on Maundy Thursday, it's a day that we  
13 always have communion, and they bring their offering of a  
14 couple dollars, and we don't see them again until the next  
15 Maundy Thursday.

16 It's almost amazing. Wenda and I will go, "Did you  
17 see so and so? They were there on Maundy Thursday."

18 She goes, "They were not. They have been doing that  
19 for eighteen years."

20 They have probably been doing it for about sixty  
21 years, but they're playing by the rule. They're a communing  
22 contributors, and they're just fine, thanks.

23 But wouldn't it be interesting if we changed that  
24 communing contributor, the CC, into cleansed Christians?

25 Instead of what so easily becomes constipated

1 Christians that are stopped up and plugged and full of toxins  
2 and that which will create ulcers, and cancer, or far worse,  
3 wouldn't that be interesting if we raised the bar and talked  
4 about deep cleaning.

5 That's what the Psalmist is talking about. "Purge  
6 me with hyssop and I shall be clean."

7 And I have paraphrased that, I have changed that  
8 slightly, "Purge me with his help."

9 It's not about me going to the dry cleaner; it's not  
10 about me buying the latest product; it's not about me getting  
11 a handy wipe or an alcohol sterile cloth; it's not about me  
12 doing it.

13 It's doing it with God through Christ. That's what  
14 Paul is talking about.

15 Don't let the sun go down on your anger. You do  
16 that stuff, it's going to internalize and you're going to  
17 become toxic, you're going to become thinner, you're going to  
18 become stopped up and constipated.

19 It's a figurative as well as a literal cleansing,  
20 and how often does it happen?

21 Well, it doesn't happen often enough.

22 Some of us thinks it happens when we get the water  
23 out of baptism.

24 Luther used to talk about it all the time. It's  
25 like flowing water; it's not stagnant water.



1 coffee we sat there for a while and walked around.

2 We were looking through this yacht yard and they had  
3 two yachts right by each other.

4 One was 4.9 million dollars and the other one was  
5 4.86 or something million dollars for boats.

6 So we went from there, that wasn't the best part,  
7 that was the worst part really, it was kind of sickening, but  
8 we went from there to the Seattle Music Experience, Paul  
9 Allen's big deal where you can do the whole music thing.

10 And then we went to Adrian's Church at 5:00 o'clock.  
11 Wow.

12 They rent space in a Methodist church that is dying.  
13 In the morning the Methodists are there for their quiet  
14 service.

15 And then at 5:00 o'clock Adrian's church comes in,  
16 and it was awesome, because the pastor of the Methodist  
17 church just got another call, so they all prayed for her as  
18 she's getting ready to go, and they are bringing in another  
19 one.

20 But it's an amazing community and it's all part of  
21 his house.

22 So I want to introduce you, Adrian. Tell them a  
23 little bit more that I didn't steal from your presentation  
24 and tell them what is going, would you, please, and talk a  
25 little bit?

1           ADRIAN FRY: Hi. It's really good to be back, not  
2 only to come home to my parents and my community, but to the  
3 church, because a lot of you probably don't even recognize me  
4 because I have gone for a few years.

5           And that was my own deal of being really tired and  
6 of just falling into a role of complacency and not enjoying  
7 where I was and not liking to, I don't know, because believe  
8 it or not, having two parents as pastors can leave some  
9 wounds about how you feel about faith and religion and I  
10 needed some time to deal with those.

11           So I've been away and I went to Seattle to do that,  
12 but that's not why God moved me to Seattle, and it took me a  
13 while to realize that, because I was just moving with the  
14 intention of just dancing.

15           And I don't know if anybody else has fallen into an  
16 addiction with what they do, or with their job, or with  
17 another person, or just any sort of codependent role.

18           But eventually you fall on your face, and it's not  
19 really fun to admit that, but it happens and it's true.

20           So after about a month of training, we took  
21 seventeen classes a week, which is twenty-four hours of  
22 dancing a week, and I was completely burnt out and I was  
23 ready to quit, I was ready to come home, I was ready to not  
24 do it anymore.

25           And then some random girl just started talking to me

1 at dance and she asked me if I had any other interests.

2 And I was like no, please, what are you talking  
3 about? I'm just here to dance.

4 She was a Christian and she invited me to a  
5 discussion group that they had at a coffee house, because  
6 it's Seattle, so there's coffee everywhere, and they just had  
7 a lot of different events going on through their church,  
8 which it's all about young people, and it's all about loving  
9 each other.

10 And I was so taken aback by that the first time I  
11 was around that.

12 I didn't understand like not saying the Apostle's  
13 Creed, and not saying the Lord's Prayer every Sunday, and  
14 like being around people that were willing to pray for you so  
15 willingly.

16 And so at first I thought it was fake, I was like  
17 please, this isn't real, but you have to let yourself go.

18 And I think that this verse in Ephesians is so  
19 powerful, especially 31 where it says, "Put away from you all  
20 bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander,  
21 together with all malice, and be kind to one another,  
22 tenderhearted, forgiving one another."

23 It's really hard to do that if you have all that  
24 previous stuff still in you.

25 If you still have all that anger in you, it's so

1 hard to be tenderhearted to each other.

2 And so going to this church and being involved in  
3 this community and in my house really gave me an opportunity  
4 to detox, because I really needed to get a lot out that  
5 wasn't doing me any good.

6 And so I've really just had a really great  
7 opportunity to do that.

8 And in my journey I have read this book called "The  
9 Journey of Desire", by John Eldridge.

10 And there is some really powerful stuff in here, and  
11 a point that really hit me, I have a quote, it's about  
12 accountability.

13 It says, "The fact is, at this point in our journey  
14 we have only three options.

15 "One, to be alive and thirsty.

16 "Two, to be dead.

17 "Or, three, to be addicted.

18 "There are no other choices. Most of the world  
19 lives in addiction. Most of the church has chosen deadness.

20 "The Christian is called to a life of holy longing.  
21 To live in thirst is to live with an ache. Every addiction  
22 comes from the attempt to get rid of an ache."

23 The premise of this book is about how a lot of times  
24 people view Christians as people that don't have any desire,  
25 and that being a Christian means you are supposed to kind of

1     forfeit every fiber of desire that you have in your heart,  
2     and it's actually the exact opposite.

3             The definition of a Christian is one that follows  
4     after Christ, but that's also to have desire, and that what  
5     makes you really true in your identity is how you hunger for  
6     God.

7             And so when I had moved, when I left Elkhorn to go  
8     to Seattle, I didn't have a foundation, and I was addicted.

9             I was addicted to myself, and I was addicted to what  
10    I was doing.

11            And I think it's so easy to fall into that role,  
12    where if you don't have a religion, then you are going to  
13    make something your religion, or somebody your religion, and  
14    that can be your job or anything.

15            PASTOR MARK FRY: Tell a little bit about making  
16    religion an addiction. Can you talk about that?

17            ADRIAN FRY: Yes, I've really found a difference  
18    between faith and religion. I had a really bitter taste in  
19    my mouth about religion.

20            PASTOR MARK FRY: How many times did you worship  
21    every week as a kid? How often did you worship as a kid,  
22    come to church?

23            ADRIAN FRY: We had Wednesday night and --

24            PASTOR MARK FRY: You basically sat in the front row  
25    every week.

1           ADRIAN FRY: Yes, had to walk.

2           PASTOR MARK FRY: You walked to church, because both  
3 your parents stole the cars, so you guys walked, and that  
4 wasn't real -- it was real, it was happening, God was working  
5 --

6           ADRIAN FRY: I really missed the people that were on  
7 fire for God, and I really took note of people that had  
8 fallen into a role of, okay, here I am for an hour every  
9 week, see you next Sunday, Pastor, instead of being a  
10 community.

11           Because the church that I'm in now, when there's a  
12 crisis we don't call the pastor unless it's a huge deal.

13           We call each other and we pray with each other and  
14 worship with each other and that's really what my house is  
15 used for a lot, is for worship time, where people can come  
16 together and bring a guitar and then we pray, and so it's  
17 more of a reality.

18           It's more in the Book of Acts, where people are  
19 getting together in their homes and worshipping together and  
20 praying together, instead of waiting until coming to a  
21 building, because the church is a body of people.

22           PASTOR MARK FRY: And I want to be accountable to  
23 some of the, I guess of the mistakes that I've made as a  
24 parent, of assuming that if your kid is in church you're  
25 doing the right thing; and if your kid is in confirmation,

1 you're doing the right thing.

2 But what Adrian unfortunately experienced was an  
3 unfair expectation, and then what he heard when he came home  
4 was usually grilled parishioner.

5 He wasn't around the people that were on fire and he  
6 often times heard about the frustrations of a mom and dad  
7 that were out of balance.

8 Do you follow me?

9 Of all of the frustrations and all of the cares and  
10 concerns and all of the weights and the expectations that we  
11 took on ourselves.

12 So the incubator of faith for that is really kind of  
13 interesting, and God was working in that somehow.

14 But what I'm hearing Adrian teach me about, I want  
15 to be accountable to the fact that I wasn't the world's best  
16 parent.

17 In fact, I was probably the world's worst parent,  
18 but today is a new day.

19 Cleansing. Accountability. Don't let the sun go  
20 down on your anger.

21 Get the garbage out, or it will kill you. Or it  
22 will kill your kids. So that's a little on accountability.

23 When I was with Adrian on Sunday it was awesome. I  
24 described our dinner and then we went to church at 5:00  
25 o'clock.

1           And Adrian had been advertising that I like to cook,  
2           so I was going to cook for the guys back at the house.

3           We went back about 7:00 o'clock and I bought some  
4           Koho salmon down at the market and we had salmon and pasta  
5           and broccoli and a wonderful meal.

6           About 9:00 o'clock some of the guys were watching  
7           the football game and stuff, and this one kid, the guy who is  
8           actually Adrian's roommate, David, he's from Corvallis,  
9           Oregon, which is a fairly significant drive, he came back  
10          just for the weekend to go to church and to be with us at  
11          this meal that I prepared.

12          He's getting ready to leave. He works construction  
13          in his dad's company and he's taking one of the other kids in  
14          the house, Louie, and Louie is this real kind of a  
15          spontaneous guy and he comes out on the deck and he goes,  
16          "Okay, you guys, everybody come around, lay hands on us,  
17          we've got a long drive. I want you to pray."

18          Second nature. Every one of these nine guys just  
19          gets up, lays their hands on Louie and Dave, "You have a four  
20          hour drive, keep the deer from jumping out in the road,  
21          protect these brothers."

22          Louie just goes, "Okay, now we are going to pray for  
23          Adrian and his dad. They've got a flight tomorrow."

24          Everybody just shifts right over. "Lord, bless  
25          Adrian and Mark. It's so great that he could be here on

1 Father's Day. Bless him, because he served us," and I'm just  
2 a waste.

3 That's a house, it isn't a church, and it's so close  
4 to the surface, it's just bubbling over, it's just awesome.  
5 So that's a little on the accountability.

6 Do you want to speak a little of the reconciliation?  
7 That was the other heading we talked about. Teach us a  
8 little on that, would you, too, Adrian?

9 ADRIAN FRY: It's great to have parents that are  
10 willing to reconcile.

11 I know a lot of us don't, but I know that God has  
12 that ability also, and he has given us that pleasure, to  
13 reconcile with him.

14 When I left I was so mad all the time. Everyone  
15 goes through that teen angst, but sometimes you just don't  
16 really don't get out of it.

17 And we had an opportunity to do that as a family,  
18 and just be able to be mad, and not to sin about it, like  
19 Ephesians tells us, but to get it out.

20 Because if you don't get that cancer out, if you  
21 don't cut it out of your life, then it takes over you, and  
22 leave no room for the devil. Clearly, that's very, very  
23 important.

24 PASTOR MARK FRY: Or it will got to the next  
25 generation.

1           ADRIAN FRY: Yes, and that's all over the Old  
2 Testament, too, of where if you let the sun go down on your  
3 anger, and you don't reconcile, that it gets passed on to  
4 your kids and all of the generations to come.

5           And so it's just so important to be able to have  
6 that opportunity to detox.

7           And if your parents aren't available, do it in your  
8 community and have that accountability to just run with you,  
9 because it's just natural now in my house.

10           It just happens in my house in Elkhorn and in my  
11 house in Seattle. It's okay and it's good.

12           PASTOR MARK FRY: Oftentimes uncomfortable.

13           ADRIAN FRY: Very much so, but I feel that we should  
14 be uncomfortable.

15           We should get out of complacency and we should wake  
16 up to understanding that God is alive, and understanding that  
17 we need to be alive, and we need to be thirsty, and to not  
18 let addiction and to not let that into your life and cause  
19 the death of your soul.

20           PASTOR MARK FRY: Next week you are going to come  
21 and teach a little more community stuff.

22           Thank you so much, Adrian, for teaching us.

23                           (Applause)

24

25